MONTEREY NEWS

February 2008
VOLUME XXXVIII · Number 2

The Town

The News still does not have a town reporter, so the editor compiled this report from the Select Board meeting minutes recorded by Inter-Departmental Secretary Melissa Noe and approved by the Select Board. (Section headings and order are the editor's.) The meetings of December 17, December 31, January 7 and January 14 are covered in this report. There was no meeting on December 24 or January 21, and the minutes of the January 28 meeting were not approved and made public in time for this issue. Anyone interested in being town reporter should contact the editor.

Investigation of Town Clerk's Office

How to conduct the investigation of complaints about the Town Clerk's office was discussed by the Select Board (Jon Sylbert, Chair; Wayne Burkhart; Scott Jenssen) in each of their meetings. They decided that the basis of the investigation would be to look into complaints received about the conduct and operation of the Town Clerk's office, which would result in a report to be printed in the Town Report to inform voters and help them make an educated decision at the polls. On December 31, Town Counsel

Winter sunrise at Lowland Farm, New Marlborough Road (photograph by Barbara Tryon).

Jeremia Pollard provided the Board with a draft subpoena to use and confirmed that summonses would have to be served by someone authorized to serve process; he also recommended that everyone to be interviewed be given a summons. The Board sent a letter to all Town Boards requesting that any Board members who had complaints about the Town Clerk's office should make an appointment to appear at the hearing.

At their January 7th meeting, the Board discussed the opening of the investigation in great detail and unanimously agreed that if the Town Clerk were to improve her cooperation in her work with other boards and officials and admit to misrepresenting Melissa Noe's character, then the Board would not proceed with the investigation. Select Board members Wayne Burkhart and Scott Jenssen met with Town Clerk Barbara Swann during her posted office hours on January 9. Swann saw no need to apologize, but agreed to write down a list of all of her grievances. At the Select Board's January 14th meeting, Jon Sylbert explained that the Board has only a few options to deal with a problem concerning an elected Town official, and opening an investigation is one of the options (as advised by Town Counsel). It isn't to be a witch hunt and no one is being asked to resign. The Board noted that the investigation isn't being done just because of Melissa Noe's problem's with the Town Clerk's office. Burkhart did not agree with opening the investigation; Sylbert and Jenssen both agreed to do so, and the Board decided to begin the investigation process in executive session at 9:30 a.m. on February 11, with the Town Counsel sitting in.

(*Editor's note: On January 30th, the Select Board cancelled the investigation. See letters from the Select Board and Town Clerk on p. 5.*)

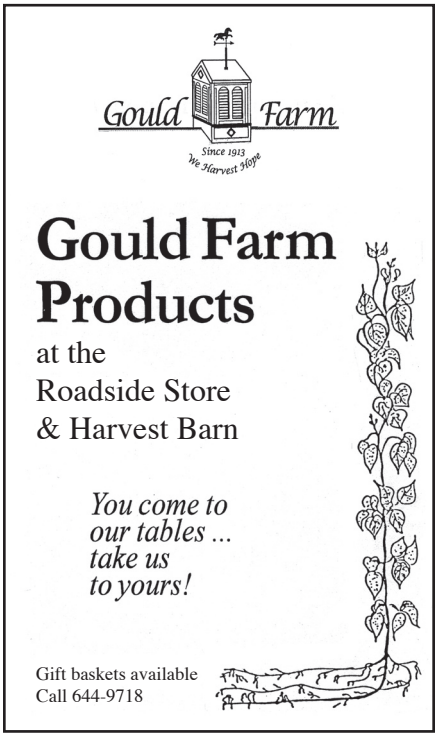
Building Issues

The Select Board met with Building Inspector, Donald Torrico to review several items. Torrico and Sanitary Inspector Peter Kolodziej met with the owners of record for the Blue Heron Landing apartments and their attorney to discuss illegal building work performed and health code violations. The owners are going to begin work on rectifying the situation to the satisfaction of the Building Inspector, but a court date about the issue is still set for the end of January.

Torrico met with the Raffas, representatives of the potential buyers of the Seven Stones property; the purchase will include the boathouse and large house on the lake as well as all the camp buildings (38 acres with options for another 60). The Select Board and Building Inspector are aware of a Form A being filed with the Planning Board, and Torrico is currently reviewing land use with the Raffas.

During his investigation Torrico found that a camp permit that expired in July 2005 had been issued to a Camp Machne through the Board of Health. He believes the permit was illegally issued because a state camp inspection was not applied for or performed, and since the permit was not legally issued the property is actually an abandoned property (which would change the use). Torrico stated that the last legally operated camp with proper permits and inspections was in 2000. The new owners plan to open it as a children's residential summer sports camp with approximately 80–90 staff and 280 children. Their ultimate goal is to open up year round (which is not allowed by the Town).

Torrico said that the only building permit issued in the last four years according to what is on file was a demolition permit. The new owners initially came in to ask about mobile homes being brought in to house their workers, but Town bylaws do not allow this unless it's for new construction



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of a single family home, and that would need to be applied for as a special permit before the Zoning Board of Appeals. The first order of business will be to determine if the property has been abandoned or not. The Select Board suggested that Torrico check with Town Counsel on the issues that have been raised.

During the discussion with the Board the Town bylaws were reviewed, and it was determined that they contain incorrect information and that the Town Clerk should be notified. The Board instructed Melissa Noe not to sell any more copies of the bylaws until they are corrected.

On the Roads

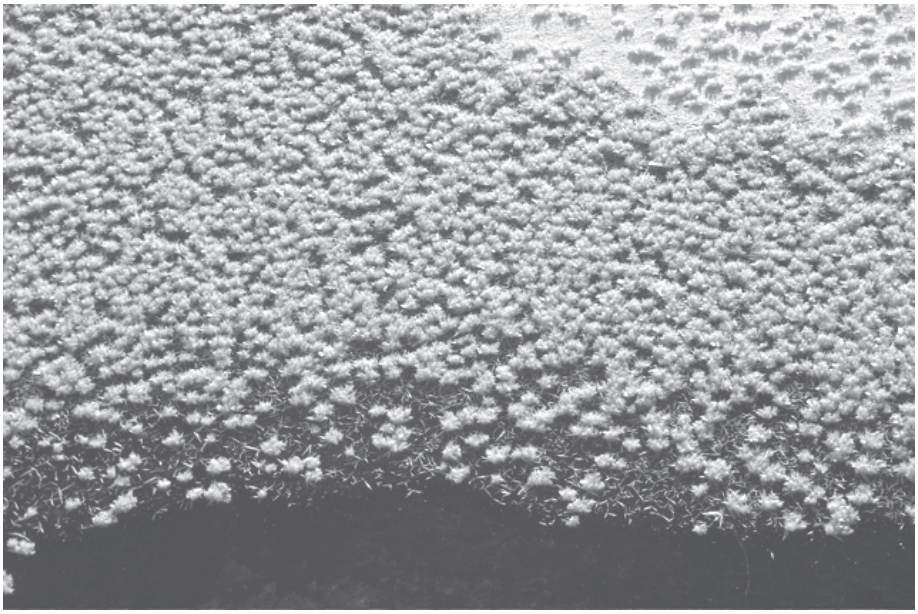
The Select Board meets regularly with the Director of Operations Maynard Forbes to discuss highways and operations. In response to a question from Scott Jenssen, Forbes explained that the road salt is green because the vendor adds a coloring agent so you can see where salt has been spread. The Board commended the crew on the job well done on the roads during the recent storms.

Fire Department

Fire Chief Ray Tryon informed the Select Board that the Fire Department is requesting a phone at the skating rink for the winter months. Tryon has been giving false alarms a lot of thought since a call in December required the Fire Department to make a forcible entry. He questioned who would be liable if the Fire Department has to break in and then cannot lock up the house when they leave. He doesn't feel there should be a false alarm fine, but if a call is made to the house with an alarm that is not registered with the Town, then the Town could fine the owner for not registering the alarm system. Tryon was given a copy of the 2007 active alarm permits report. (The 2008 Alarm Permit applications need to be turned in to the Town by January 15, 2008.)

At the January 7th meeting, Tryon asked the Board to have Inter-Departmental Secretary Melissa Noe send out a false alarm letter to the residents of 216 Main Road for a false fire alarm that occurred over the previous weekend.

On December 17, K. Wasiuk, President of Elephant Rock Road Association, met with the Board and Chief Tryon to question incorrect statements made by Tryon at the November 19th Select Board meeting regarding Elephant Rock Road and Woodland Drive. Wasiuk said that the electric company pruned the trees there recently and that several large trucks have gone down the road recently. She stated that the association goes beyond the tennis courts, stopping at the Walker's A-frame. The residents on Woodland Drive are discussing updating the road beyond where the association ends but some residents on that road don't want to be part of the repairs. Tryon said that if a lot of money had been put into improving that road he was unable to see it, and that the problem is the hemlocks on the side of the road, especially if an ice storm weighed down the branches. Tryon will meet with Wasiuk in the spring to go over what is needed from the Fire Department's perspective.



Ice on Rawson Brook (photograph by Susan Sellew).

Police Blotter

Police Chief Gareth Backhaus reported that the transmission on the cruiser could not be be rebuilt, so a factory rebuilt transmission was installed for $2600. However it too had a problem, so the garage replaced it with another newly rebuilt transmission. A faulty radio in the four-wheel-drive cruiser was replaced. Officer Martin completed his training and has begun working regular shifts. J. Sylbert asked about the speed trailer and how it was working in the winter months. Backhaus said that it is being garaged for the winter months so that it isn't damaged by winter weather road conditions. >

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The Monterey Police responded to following calls:

- Abandoned 911 call on Point Rd—misdialed number from a fax machine.
- Two vehicles stuck on Main Road that needed assistance.
- There have been several issues recently with tractor trailers getting stuck on Beartown Mountain Road (at the other side of Brett Rd). The person in charge of the logging has been informed that if this issue can't be resolved the logging will be shut down for the winter.
- False alarms on Steven's Lake Way, Tyringham Road, Wellman Road.
- Threatening note found by newspaper carrier in mailbox on Blue Hill Road.
- Complaint filed regarding an annoying, threatening phone call.
- Car off the road on Route 23.
- Ongoing complaints regarding the noisy transformer on Art School Road.
- Motor vehicle was towed after a stop due to expired registration.
- Medical emergencies on Beartown Mountain Road, Main Road, and Tyringham Road.
- Motor vehicle accidents on Corashire Road, Route 23 (near Otis), Pixley Road, Gould Road, and Main Road.
- Abandoned van on Wallace Hall Road.
- Report of a breaking and entering on Main Road; no forced entry was seen but items were missing.
- Disabled motor vehicles on Preyer-Fiske Road and Steven's Lake.
- Assisted with a drunk and disorderly call in Great Barrington.
- Suspicious motor vehicle reported on Art School Road.
- Abandoned 911 call on Mt. Hunger Road.
- Assisted domestic call at Williams Lane, Great Barrington. Restraining orders were issued.
- Well-being check.
- Assisted Fire Department with fire alarm on Main Road.
- Complaint on New Marlboro Road of someone burning plastic.

This and That

Town Accountant Barbara Gauthier asked the Select Board if the Town needed to go to a special town meeting to ask permission to spend the pothole money, but the Board said that was not required.

The Select Board approved a memo to be sent to all Town Boards and departments that have not yet submitted their FY07 town report. Those who did not turn in a report by January 15 will have a page in the Town Report that states "Report not submitted."

The Board plans to discuss with the Park Commission the possibility of upgrading the ice rink to make it usable earlier in the season and also to prevent some of the problems they are encountering with filling the ice rink and keeping it frozen.

The Select Board received a request from the Southern Berkshire Emergency Management Planning Committee for $500 to hire a secretary (each Southern Berkshire Town is being asked for the same amount). The request was forwarded to the Emergency Manager for his recommendation.

Michael Storch provided the Board with a copy of a cell phone service article from the *Berkshire Eagle*. He feels the Board can contact the powers that be as a whole with surrounding town boards to pressure Verizon to provide service to all towns.

Hugh Campbell from Massamont Insurance, alternative to MIIA for property and casualty insurance, asked Board to go through a competitive process and go to bid for the Town's insurance needs. Campbell acknowledged that most of their business is in the southeastern portion of the state.

John Makuc, Board of Health member, met with the Select Board to discuss the mutual aid agreement from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. John said that we shouldn't need to put it on the town meeting warrant; it just needs to be signed and filed with the BRPC. There are several mutual aid agreements around, which has caused confusion about how many a town should have and in what order they should be signed. The Board of

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Select Board Letter to Monterey Citizens

In consideration of reservations of interested parties regarding the scheduled investigation of the Town Clerk's Office, the Select Board has agreed to cancel the proceedings. We would like to thank those who offered their time, and want to assure everyone that we are committed to improving communications between town boards and between town boards and townspeople.

All of us in public life are obligated to put our responsibilities to the community first, to provide the town of Monterey with courteous, professional service, and to respect the sovereignty of each other's character.

Our hope now is to pull together and work cooperatively in a caring environment for the better good of Monterey, beginning with a collective act of forgiveness. From here, no doubt, we can all do great things.

— Monterey Select Board

Health has been told that once you sign the Homeland Security one it trumps all others, so that one should be signed first. John confirmed that no agreements have been signed yet, although the Town voted at town meeting that the Town could enter into mutual aid agreements.

Makuc also asked for the Select Board's help to get volunteers to help open the EDS site if ever needed and to get some volunteers for the Medical Reserve Core. Jon Sylbert suggested that we need to have a Monterey Emergency Management meeting, as it's been awhile since the last one.

Members of the Broadband Committee reported on their activities. See report on page 6.

The Select Board and the Finance Committee set the schedule for the budget process, and the Finance Committee is sending out budget request forms to Town Boards and departments.

Janet Cathcart resigned from the Employee Compensation Committee and the Select Board appointed Michael Storch to replace her.

— Will Marsh
(from Select Board minutes)

From the Town Clerk of Monterey

On February 11th from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the Monterey Town Offices, our Town's Select Board is beginning the first phase of an investigation "to hear complaints into the conduct and operation of the office of the Town Clerk." The meeting has been announced as a closed, Executive Session meeting, however I am requesting that it be made public and open under the Open Meeting Law of our State (MGL Chapter 39 Section 23B) to be sure the discussion's setting is a balanced one.

You have elected me to eight successive terms in office. As such, I work for you — and wish for you to hear the reasons for which I am being investigated and decide for yourselves whether this investigation is valid and warrants the continuing expense of taxpayer dollars.

A look at public records on the matter available at the Town Offices or the Town website makes mention of a professional disagreement about certain functions of the Town Clerk. I was elected to perform the duties assigned to the Clerk and take the laws of such duties very seriously.

My unwillingness to adjust some of these elected responsibilities, coupled with a failed professional mediation that attempted to further assist in these adjustments, have degraded the situation and turned it into a perceived personal disagreement by some. Yet it is not personal, it is at its core, a disagreement of certain statutory or legal duties of the Town Clerk.

Over the last 20+ years as your Clerk I have diligently worked to exceed the requirements of my position, including evening appointments at the office and holiday/weekend calls to ensure everyone obtains the assistance they need because I believe in giving our town the best quality of service that I possibly can.

I have been quiet for the last year and a half (partially to honor a request from some Select Board members), hoping this matter could be cleared up through a thorough clarification of the reasons behind my legal duties as Clerk. However, it is now time to clear the air through the process of full disclosure to the public. I am asking that you attend to finally put this matter to rest. I would like to extend my gratitude to those who will take the time from their busy lives to attend this event.

— Barbara B. Swann, Certified
Massachusetts Municipal Clerk;
Certified National Municipal Clerk

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Monterey Broadband Committee Update

The Monterey Broadband Committee was formed to help bring broadband to the majority of Monterey. The committee estimates that only about one-third of Monterey has access to high-speed Internet service through DSL and T1 lines. The committee is currently working with the Monterey Select Board, other towns in the area, Berkshire Connect, and local, state, and federal politicians to come up with viable broadband Internet options in Monterey and other underserved areas of Western Massachusetts.

Here are some current and upcoming developments regarding broadband access in Monterey:

Broadband Survey

Early in January, the Monterey Broadband Committee mailed a broadband survey to town residents, urging that it be completed and returned to Berkshire Connect by March 1, 2008. Survey forms are also available at Monterey Town Hall, the Monterey General Store, and the Monterey Library. The survey can also be completed online at www.bcconnet.org (bottom right box). The survey is designed to gather information that will identify more precisely where high-speed Internet service exists and, more importantly, where it does not exist. This information will be used to create maps that will be critical when working to provide service to unserved areas and will reinforce the inequity between eastern and western Massachusetts. **Please complete and return the survey by March 1 if you have not yet done so.**

South County Meeting

Monica Webb and Jon Sylbert met with the other South County Broadband Committee chairs, Berkshire Connect, South Berkshire Chamber, Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC), and the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development (EOHED) to share information about the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) and the Incentive Fund created in Governor Patrick's $25 million bond bill. This bill would provide funds to the MBI to work with private providers to contribute to the building of broadband networks in areas in Massachusetts that are unserved and underserved by broadband. The EOHED made it clear that they are working hard to get the bill passed as quickly as possible (hopefully February or March). They informed the group that to help with that goal, citizens are urged to call the office of Mark Montigny (Senate Chair for the Committee on Bonding) to ask that the public hearing be scheduled ASAP, and that the bill come to the floor for a vote ASAP. The South Berkshire Chamber is going to try to organize a group to attend the public hearing. Please contact the committee at broadbandcommittee@verizon.net if you are interested.

The EOHED also made it clear that after the bill is passed, the MBI will be working as quickly as possible to get the technologies installed. They stressed that they will be considering technologies that take into account future bandwidth needs and provide regional (not town-by-town) solutions. The overwhelming consensus from the meeting was that the South County towns will need to work together to ensure the solution that comes to the region is long-term, robust, and installed in a timely and efficient manner.

Jan 31st Public Meeting

As this issue was going to press, a public meeting is scheduled for January 31 to discuss broadband service with the Broadband Committee, Monterey Select Board, State Senator Ben Downing, and State Representative Smitty Pignatelli. Verizon was asked to send representatives but was not willing to do so. Despite the committee's repeated attempts to engage Verizon, we have been told they are unwilling to extend DSL coverage at this time, which is what other local towns have experienced as well. Results of the meeting will be presented in the March *Monterey News*.

March 1st Broadband Forum

A Public Broadband Forum for Western Massachusetts will be held on March 1 from 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m. at the Clarion Hotel & Conference Center in Northampton, Massachusetts. Senator John Kerry, Congressman John Olver, and FCC Commissioners will be attending. There is no charge for attendance. To register for the Forum, send contact information to burnes@masstech.org.

— Monica Webb,
Monterey Broadband Committee

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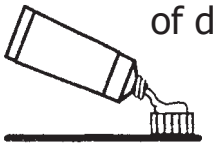

528-6520

Route 23 Monterey

Why Is Broadband So Important?

Broadband access is critical to Berkshire communities for many reasons. It has become a necessity to retain and attract business, from large-scale to home-based. It allows educators and students to communicate and conduct research. Having broadband access is also an issue of public health and safety, as it facilitates communication and the transfer of essential information in cases of emergency, as well as accessing other information by public health and safety officials.

Access to broadband is also more socially and environmentally responsible. It enables municipal governments to complete state and federal reporting requirements efficiently. It facilitates communication between government officials and their constituents, which is particularly important for small towns with limited staff hours. For residents with special needs, such as seniors and the disabled, broadband provides greater access to the world, and better health monitoring opportunities and assistance with independent living. And of course, workers who telecommute don't need to travel as much.

The Monterey Broadband Committee was appointed by the Monterey Select Board and meets regularly in Monterey. For complete information, including Committee updates, please refer to the town web site at http://www.montereyma.gov/Public_Documents/MontereyMA_About/broadband or e-mail the committee at broadbandcommittee@verizon.net.

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Property Tax Work-Off Program for Seniors

The Town of Monterey Property Tax Work-Off Program open to anyone over 60 years of age who owns and lives in a residence in Monterey at least 8 months of the year, or is the spouse of the owner of the property for which the abatement is requested. The maximum abatement will be $750 per year; the hourly rate is fixed at $7.50 per hour. Only one abatement can be earned per residence. The Town's liability insurance will cover anyone who volunteers, but they will receive no wages or benefits. Jobs might include painting, paperwork, mailings, gardening, secretarial, or helping at the various town buildings, etc. The Town of Monterey voted to adopt the provisions of MGL Chapter 59 Section 5 K at the Town Meeting held on May 5, 2007. Interested seniors should attend an informational meeting on February 9, 2008 at the Monterey Town Hall from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Applications can be filled out at that time. For more information you may call Pat Mielke at 528-5603.

Chord Sharks at Feb. 13th Community Dinner

The January Potluck Dinner had a small but attentive group to hear Leonard Weber's lively discussion of healthy lifestyle changes promoting longevity. Many thanks to him for the program, and he certainly is the living proof!

The next Monterey Community Potluck Dinner will be February 13th, Valentine's Eve, and we are thrilled to present the marvelous award-winning barbershop quartet, the Chord Sharks, who sang for us last Valentine's Day. They are members of the Berkshire Hillsmen, the local chapter of the Barbershop Harmony Society. We are very happy to welcome them again.

The February 13th Potluck Dinner will be at 6 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall of the Monterey Meetinghouse. All are welcome. Please bring a dish to share with a serving utensil and a place setting and plate for yourself.

Happy Valentine's Day!

— Kyle Pierce

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Monterey Democrats to Caucus

All registered Democrats in Monterey are invited to caucus on Saturday, February 2, 2008, at 10 a.m. in the Meetinghouse basement. We will be electing one Delegate and one Alternate to attend the 2008 Massachusetts Democratic Convention.

The Convention will be held on Friday, June 7, and Saturday, June 8, at the Tsongas Arena in Lowell. At that time, Democrats from across the state will gather to endorse candidates for the office of U.S. Senator.

Anyone, at least eighteen-years old and registered as a Democrat as of December 31, 2007, is welcome to attend and to run for a Delegate position. Candidates for Delegate and Alternate must be present at the Caucus and consent to nomination.

Those people not elected as Delegate or Alternate may apply to be "add-on" Delegates in the following categories: youth (35 and under), minority, and disabled. Discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, color, creed, national origin, religion, ethnic identity, sexual orientation or economic status in the conduct of the Caucus is strictly prohibited.

A Democratic Town Committee Meeting will follow the Caucus.

For additional information contact Muriel Lazzarini at 528-5796 or malazz@verizon.net.

Republican Caucus Call

Citizens of Monterey who are qualified voters and members of the Republican Party are hereby requested to meet in caucus at the Monterey Meetinghouse basement at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, February 23, 2008, to nominate candidates for the various town offices to be voted for at the Annual Town Meeting on May 3, 2008, at the Monterey Firehouse. The caucus will be held and is called under the provisions of Chapter 53 of General Laws and will be called to order by the Chairman of the Republican Town Committee.

— Republican Town Committee
Mark Makuc, Chairman

Monterey Board of Assessors Needs Member

The Board of Assessors is seeking an applicant to run for a position on our board that is being vacated at the end of this fiscal year (the May Town Meeting. The current board members divide the assessing duties into specific categories. We are looking for a person who has an interest in doing assessing research, publishing information relating to the assessing process, and revising our published information from time to time.

Please call Stan Ross, 528-1443, ext. 115, or 528-4990.

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Let Your Voice Be Heard!

The following is a list of the town office vacancies that will occur as terms of office run out, or due to resignations. (Incumbents are shown in parentheses.) Those who choose to run again, or anyone desirous of running for any of these offices may do so by sending a letter of interest to the Republican or Democratic Committee Chairperson by February 22, 2008. Contact them for more information:

• Town Republican Chair Mark Makuc, Box 771, Monterey, MA 01245; 528-1328, mjjminmonterey@yahoo.com.

• Town Democratic Chair Muriel Lazzerini, Box 427, Main Road, Monterey, MA 01245; 528-5796, malazz@verizon.net.

Board of Assessors
Regular 3 years (Robert Lazzarini)

Planning Board (2 resignations)
Regular 5 years (Alan Salamon)
Replacement for Laurily Epstein (3 years)
Replacement for Janet Cathcart (2 years)

Park Commission
Replacement for Andrew Shaw (1year)
(Bridget Krans)
Regular 3 years (James V. Edelman)

Library Trustees
Regular 3 years (Laurie Shaw)
Regular 3 years (Linda Thorpe)

Select Board
Regular 3 years (Jonathan Sylbert)

Finance Committee
Regular 3 years (Maureen Haugh)

Board of Health
Regular 3 years (John Makuc)

Zoning Board of Appeals
Regular 5 years (Fred Chapman)

Cemetery Committee
Regular 3 years (Tom Haugh)

Tree Warden
1 year (Roger Tryon)

Moderator
1 year (Mark J. J. Makuc)

Presidential Primary News from Monterey Town Clerk

Please be aware that the Presidential Primary, normally held in March, has been moved up a month to Tuesday, February 5, 2008, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. It will be held at the Monterey Fire Company, Ltd., Firehouse. Voters registered as "U" or Unenrolled may choose any ballot to vote in this Primary.

Four ballots will be available: Democratic (termed "D" on your streetlist form), Republican (denoted by "R" on the streetlist forms), and Green-Rainbow (denoted "J" on the streetlist forms). The Working Families Party (denoted by "Z") has chosen not to submit names for this balloting. Please be aware there are, in addition to these four Parties, groups termed Political Designations, listed at http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepar/paridx.htm. Designations do not have ballots for the Primary so those registered to a Designation will not be able to get a ballot.

Finally, please be aware that new voters may be asked to show ID. Kindly bring that with you.

The Annual Census/Streetlisting for Monterey (required by law in Massachusetts) was mailed to each household in early January. Please return the Census form as soon as possible so that we can have our listings up-to-date when the Presidential Primary is held. As most of you know, we normally send a form to you filled with correct information, but we still need for you to mail the form back after signing it. If you do not receive a census form in the mail by the end of January and you are a year-round resident (owner or renter), kindly contact the Town Clerk at 528-5175. That phone number will reach the Clerk even out of regular hours. We can then arrange to mail you a form, and to get from you the information needed for the census.

Thank you for your cooperation, as always.

— Barbara B. Swann,
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Gould Farm Looking for Auction Items, Barn-Themed Art for May 3rd Gala

Gould Farm's 10th annual Honors Gala is happening on Saturday, May 3rd, at the new Crissey Farm facility in Great Barrington. The Gala is an important fundraising event for Gould Farm, a nonprofit and one of the oldest residential therapeutic communities in the United States that is licensed to treat adults and young adults with severe mental illness.

This year the Gala is honoring David Colt, who grew up on Gould Farm while both of his parents worked there and continued his association with the Farm by serving as an associate board member or director for more than 50 years. David is a retired lawyer and lives in Williamstown, Massachusetts.

As part of the evening's fundraising, there will be a live auction, as well as a silent auction of barn-themed art pieces. The Farm is looking for donations of items for both auctions.

For the live auction, new or good-condition vintage items such as collectibles, antiques, children's items, event tickets, electronics, etc., or certificates for services would be very much appreciated. For the barn-themed silent auction, the Farm is looking for artists' representations of barns, including photographs, paintings, lithographs, and decorative models (including birdhouses). Donors will receive a letter giving the estimated value of the item to use for tax purposes.

If you have an item to donate, please contact Madeleine Tramm at Gould Farm at 413-528-1804, ext. 13, or mtramm@gouldfarm.org.

Gould Farm, started in 1913, continues today to fulfill its mission of enabling individuals suffering from mental illness to build lives of responsibility, self-respect, and personal fulfillment through a unique program of clinical care, work on a 650-acre self-sustaining farm, and community living. Gould Farm has residential programs in Monterey, and in Medford, Massachusetts. For more information on Gould Farm or the Gould Farm Gala, please visit www.gouldfarm.org.

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Cultural Council Hosting Basketmaking Workshop

Popular local basketmaker Wendy Jensen will return to Monterey to teach her art on Saturday, March 15th, at the Monterey Meetinghouse. In this hands-on, daylong workshop for adults Jensen will teach how to make a colonial carrying basket. All supplies will be provided. No experience is necessary, but the workshop is also appropriate for experienced basketmakers who want to learn new skills.

The workshop will run from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.. Preregistration is required and limited to 12 people, with priority given to Monterey residents until March 1. There is a $25.00 fee for materials and some scholarship funds are available. Lunch is not provided, so participants should bring their own or purchase one at the General Store. For information and registration call Joe Baker, 528-9385.

Wendy Jensen is an award-winning basketmaker who has taught basketmaking for over 15 years at her studio in Great Barrington and at various craft schools and museums. She exhibits her work in galleries and at craft shows throughout the Northeast; recently some of her work has been published in *500 Baskets* by Lark Books.

The Cultural Council is working on scheduling several other events this spring, including a workshop in April titled The Art of Pastel II: The da Vinci Mode, led by Gregory Maichack of Holyoke, and a printmaking workshop taught by artist Adrienne Lederman, a resident of Otis and New York. In May naturalist and Monterey resident Bonner McAllester will lead a nature hike. Watch the *Monterey News* for details.

Do You Have a Child Who Is Afraid of Dogs?

Many children don't know how to approach dogs, and because they are nervous they become excited when they greet a dog. This can send the dog the wrong message and thereby put the child at risk to be injured by the dog. You and your children can learn how to safely greet a dog and interact with the dog in order to PREVENT A DOG BITE.

Attend a free Dog Bite Prevention class on Sunday, February 10, at 4 p.m. at Lambie Hall at New England Keswick in Monterey. Nora Hayes, our town Animal Control Officer, has worked with dogs for years and will be giving a presentation and live demonstration.

For more information call Mary Makuc at 528-5834 or Nora Hayes at 229-5999.

Pickup Hockey

Adult, pickup hockey games, with a soft puck and no checking, are continuing, with games on Tuesday and Thursday nights at 7 p.m. and on Sundays at 9 a.m., weather permitting. Little experience is required. The games are casual, spontaneous, and fun. The rink has a heated room, lights, and a low cover charge—free. Helmets are required and pads are recommended even with the soft puck. The indoor rink is at the Monterey Pavilion behind the fire station. For more information, email sgraves8@yahoo.com.

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The Green Way in Monterey

Town of Monterey Green Practices

Director of Operations Maynard Forbes reports that Monterey's Highway Department is implementing the following efforts to Be Green.

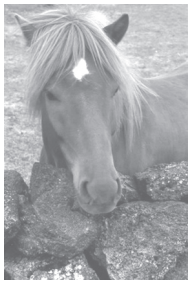
• All diesel trucks are using biodiesel fuel, which consists of diesel fuel plus 10% vegetable oil, plus an ingredient called "ultra Sulfur."

• Salt for Monterey's roads is treated with a de-icer, so that less salt as used. The product, called "Clear Lane Plus," is colored green. How about that!

• The Department plans to install solar panels on the Town Garage to help power lights, computers, and machinery. The Center of Ecological Technology (CET) provided technical assistance in evaluating the site and providing model bid specifications. The Town's next steps are to go out to bid, select an installer, and apply to the MTC for a rebate. The funds that Monterey has earned through New England GreenStart will go towards the cost of this community renewable energy installation.

Nice Job, Highway Department!

— Ellen Pearson



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Special Permit Procedures Involving the Town Clerk

From Chapter 40A, Section 9 of the Massachusetts General Laws (MGL):

Each application for a special permit shall be filed by the petitioner with the city or town clerk and a copy of said application, including the date and time of filing certified by the city or town clerk, shall be filed forthwith by the petitioner with the special permit granting authority. The special permit granting authority shall hold a public hearing, for which notice has been given as provided in section eleven, on any application for a special permit within sixty-five days from the date of filing of such application…. The decision of the special permit granting authority shall be made within ninety days following the date of such public hearing. The required time limits for a public hearing and said action may be extended by written agreement between the petitioner and the special permit granting authority. A copy of such agreement shall be filed in the office of the city or town clerk. A special permit issued by a special permit granting authority shall require a two-thirds vote of boards with more than five members, a vote of at least four members of a five member board, and a unanimous vote of a three member board.

Failure by the special permit granting authority to take final action within said ninety days or extended time, if applicable, shall be deemed to be a grant of the special permit. The petitioner who seeks such approval by reason of the failure of the special permit granting authority to act within such time prescribed, shall notify the city or town clerk, in writing within fourteen days from the expiration of said ninety days or extended time, if applicable, of such approval and that notice has been sent by the petitioner to parties in interest. The petitioner shall send such notice to parties in interest by mail and each such notice shall specify that appeals, if any, shall be made pursuant to section seventeen and shall be filed within twenty days after the date the city or town clerk received such written notice from the petitioner that the special permit granting authority failed to act within the time prescribed.

After the expiration of twenty days without notice of appeal pursuant to section seventeen, or, if appeal has been taken, after receipt of certified records of the court in which such appeal is adjudicated, indicating that such approval has become final, the city or town clerk shall issue a certificate stating the date of approval, the fact that the special permit granting authority failed to take final action and that the approval resulting from such failure has become final, and such certificate shall be forwarded to the petitioner.

The special permit granting authority shall cause to be made a detailed record of its proceedings, indicating the vote of each member upon each question, or if absent or failing to vote, indicating such fact, and setting forth clearly the reason for its decision and of its official actions, copies of all of which shall be filed within fourteen days in the office of the city or town clerk and shall be deemed a public record, and notice of the decision shall be mailed forthwith to the petitioner, applicant or appellant, to the parties in interest designated in section eleven, and to every person present at the hearing who requested that notice be sent to him and stated the address to which such notice was to be sent. Each such notice shall specify that appeals, if any, shall be made pursuant to section seventeen and shall be filed within twenty days after the date of filing of such notice in the office of the city or town clerk.

And from Chapter 40A, Section 11:

A special permit, or any extension, modification or renewal thereof, shall not take effect until a copy of the decision bearing the certification of the city or town clerk that 20 days have elapsed after the decision has been filed in the office of the city or town clerk and either that no appeal has been filed or the appeal has been filed within such time, or if it is a special permit which has been approved by reason of the failure of the permit granting authority or special permit granting authority to act thereon within the time prescribed, a copy of the application for the special permit, accompanied by the certification of the city or town clerk stating the fact that the permit granting authority or special permit granting authority failed to act within the time prescribed, and whether or not an appeal has been filed within that time, and that the grant of the application resulting from the failure to act has become final, is recorded in the registry of deeds for the county and district in which the land is located and indexed in the grantor index under the name of the owner of record or is recorded and noted on the owner's certificate of title. The person exercising rights under a duly appealed special permit does so at risk that a court will reverse the permit and that any construction performed under the permit may be ordered undone.

— Barbara B.Swann, Town Clerk

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Geography Bee finalists (cw): Abby Moran (fourth place), Kyle Bashour (third place), Ana Mei Boyd (second place), and Jonah Carlson (first place).

Jonah Carlson Wins Local Geography Bee

The Homeschool Association Geography Bee, part of the first round in the 20th annual National Geographic Bee, took place on January 3, 2008, at the Quaker Meetinghouse in Great Barrington. The official bee was followed by an international potluck meal. From mid-November through the first three weeks in January, students from schools and homeschool associations across the country, as well as schools in U. S. territories and Department of Defense schools around the world, participate in the National Geographic Bee, sponsored by the National Geographic Society.

Jonah Carlson of Monterey, eighth-grade member of the Berkshire Adventure Learners Homeschool Association, won the school-level competition for the second year in a row. The second place finisher was Ana Mei Boyd, also of Monterey, and the third place winner was Kyle Bashour. The students answered oral questions on geography.

The children who participated in the local homeschool association bee were from Great Barrington, Monterey, Stockbridge, and Lee. In order to participate, children needed to be in fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, or eighth grade.

The next step for Jonah Carlson will be a qualifying test. If he scores among the top scores in the state, he will earn a place in the state bee, which takes place in April. The first place winner of the Massachusetts bee will earn an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., and the chance to compete for a $25,000 college scholarship in a competition moderated by *Jeopardy* host Alex Trebek.

Last year Jonah advanced to the state level competition, held in Worcester in May. He placed sixth in the state in a pool of 100 students and was the only homeschooled participant to advance to the state level.

Contact Meredyth Babcock, 413-623-2070, or Franny Huberman, 413-528-5414, for more information about the National Geographic Bee or the Berkshire Adventure Learners Association.

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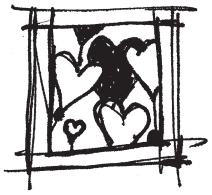
Daffodil Days Campaign

It is that time again. The American Cancer Society's Daffodil Days Campaign is in full swing! Look ahead to the first week of spring by placing an order today. Your purchase supports the more than 34,900 people in Massachusetts who will find out this year that they have cancer. A beautiful bouquet ($10), a limited edition Bear with a bouquet ($25), or potted bulbs ($15) would bring a smile to anyone.

Please support this wonderful cause and the Monterey campaign by placing an order when our volunteer calls or by contacting Pat Mielke at 528-5603. Kenn, at the Monterey General Store has, once again, offered to take delivery and pass out orders. Place your order today!



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Conversation

I said quite casually: I'm ready to go.
Death said: Hold on a bit. Steady. You know
It doesn't work that way.
You'll do as I say.
I'm the decider.
I answered back: My friend (the doctor) said:
We decide how we want to die.
That's why her boyfriend ate more pie.
Why they climb Everest; why that girl took drugs;
Why young men join the army
Why that man studies toxic bugs.
And look how many have unprotected sex, drink too much whisky,
Or ride a polo pony far too frisky.

People who want to, stretch it out
Abstain from this or that. They know what they're about.
They exercise. Slosh on lotion, grade fifteen.
Everything in moderation – sex, food, the lot.
Death shrugged.
It makes no difference. Thinking precision
Care and common sense can't change a thing.
I make the big decision.
I'll thwart your good intentions and the bad.
Understand this: Death is King.
Delaying tactics? – Pretty sad, don't mean a thing.

I thought a while. I had no good reply
And yet it's true although I didn't want to die
As I said, I'm ready to go.
So who won that argument I want to know.

— Geoffrey Charlesworth

Growing

The hell I knew had human eyes
angels that were demon wise
pain to beauty, beauty's pain
rounded wisdom round again
love came down in hate's disguise

life it is that never dies
love it is that tries and tries
child and demon, demon's child
innocent and running wild
stropped for seizing heaven's prize

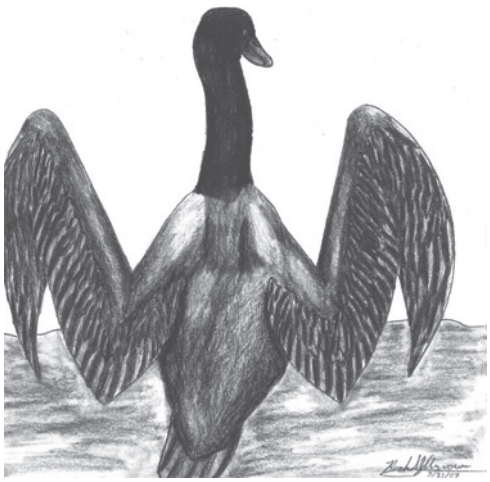
when hell is telling, heaven lies
when hell is selling, heaven buys
we struggle dreaming struggle's dreams
and reaching where our wisdom gleams
the child within us cries and cries.

— A. O. Howell

Haiku for Occam

one hides in all numbers
thus the One
hides in all creation –
figures!

— A. O. Howell



Barbara, Bruce, Ian, Steve, Sheridan, Rosemary, and Stephon McAlister (l to r) singing "YaBamba" at Stephon's adoption ceremony.

Local Adoption Makes History

On January 24, 2008, history was made not only in Monterey, not only in Berkshire County, but in the United States. The finalization of the first USA–Burkina Faso adoption was completed in Pittsfield's Probate and Family Court in front of about 30 witnesses consisting of family and friends of the McAlister family with Judge Edward Lapointe presiding.

The adoption ceremony of Stephon Zoundi McAlister was an event to remember. The family dressed in native outfits and sang a song in More, the tribal language that was Stephon's first language, while he beat a drum. Stephon is from the Mossi tribe (a warrior tribe) and is on his third language, as French was spoken at the orphanage.

Stephon Zoundi came to this country four years ago at nearly two years of age to receive medical treatment. He has undergone two very successful eye surgeries with Dr. Gregory Shouldice and is being treated at Shriners Hospital for Cerebral Palsy. Stephon has resided with Steve and Rosemary McAlister and their four children, who have been a host family caring for all his needs during this time. After about a year, the McAlisters decided to look into the possibility of adopting Stephon, as he was an orphan. They hired a lawyer in Burkina Faso, and together with the US Consulate and the Burkina government officials, went through all the lengthy, but proper, arduous steps of completing this adoption in Africa. The actual African adoption took place back in June of 2006, but it then needed to be finalized here in the USA, so the McAlisters, and others, worked on the paperwork for the past year and a half to prepare for this historic adoption in January.

In the finalization of the US adoption, the McAlisters kept the same name for Stephon that he was given in Africa, but they changed the spelling. They also made his surname of Zoundi into his middle name.

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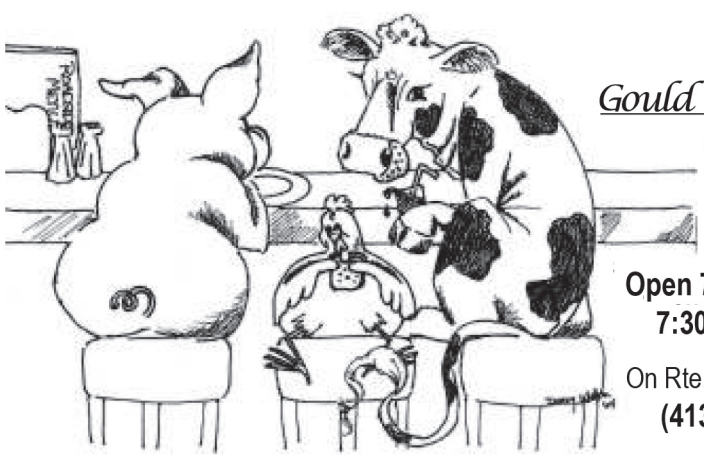

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Monterey Library Notes

Denise Andrus will be reading a story and leading our young children in a craft at the library on Saturday, Feb 9, at 10:30 a.m. A great way to get the kids into a Valentine mood!

Last year we began the process to join CWMARS, the regional automation system that serves from Worcester to the New York border. We have been upgrading our computers, working on our collection, training so that we can make the transition efficiently, and trying to hold the normal business of the library together at the same time. We appreciate your patience and are happy to say that it's likely we will be circulating in this new system within the next few weeks. Please allow us a little extra time as we learn the system and get all the patrons and books in the database. We have a lot to learn, but the benefits will more than make up for the initial inconveniences and confusion. One thing you can do to help us out is come in within the next two weeks or so and either get a CWMARS card from us or have us check your existing CWMARS card to make sure it's up to date.

Our regular library patrons know we depend on the Bookmobile program, which is run by the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System. Our regular patrons will also have noticed over the past few years a decrease in the number of new materials of all types. The Bookmobile budget has been slashed repeatedly. The acquisitions budget isn't much bigger than ours, which just covers Monterey. Several years ago the Friends of WMRLS was formed, which has raised a lot of awareness and money toward helping the Bookmobile continue. Even though we are joining CWMARS, the roughly 400 items we borrow from the Bookmobile every 11 weeks will remain a huge benefit to our patrons. It will be possible to order many more items from CWMARS once we are fully operational, but if you want to just walk in and browse, those Bookmobile items will supplement our collection on the spot. Recently the Friends of WMRLS has a program that allows anyone to donate money to buy a children's book in memory of or to honor someone. That book will travel all over Western Massachusetts and be available to children in many small towns with libraries that have even more need of the Bookmobile than we do. The Bookmobile has served Monterey for decades, and this is a great way to thank the program as well as give a gift to someone who has everything. The Friends will send a card to the person you are honoring, and a bookplate will let everyone who reads the book know who was responsible for the donation. Please consider giving to this program, and also joining the Friends of WMRLS as a member. Forms are available at the library, or go to http:/friends.wmrls.org.

Have you been to a POETRY SLAM? WMRLS, thanks to a dedicated librarian from Northhampton, is sponsoring a regional library poetry slam. The Monterey Library will be hosting a slam this spring, along with other local libraries and other libraries across the region. Slams are fun, loud, and perfect events for libraries to host. We hope to host a slam in early May, and the winner(s) will be able to go on and compete in the regional slam. Slams are competitive poetry readings where poets have up to three minutes to read their own works in front of judges picked from the crowd. There is no age requirement, and we ask poets to remember that this will be a family event in the library. If you want further information, come to the library and ask us, or search the web—there's plenty of information out there. Our slam will be on a Saturday night, so weekenders will be more than welcome to participate! This could be the biggest thing to happen on Saturday night in Monterey since Kenn started his music nights at the store! Stay tuned for more details! Start composing a poem, and most important, practice the delivery!

— Mark Makuc, Library Director

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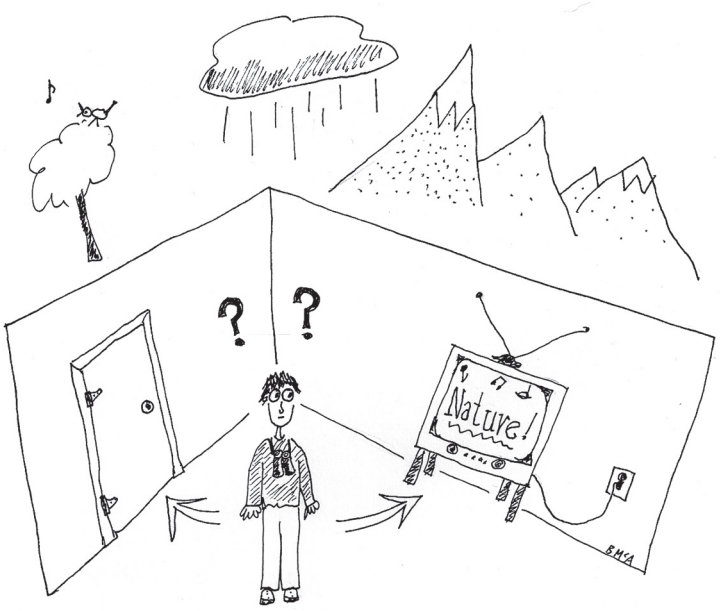
Nature, the Movie (What's my problem?)

We have been watching the BBC series *The Planet Earth,* which we got for Christmas. Even though I kinda hate it, I can't leave it alone. For one thing, the photography is out of this world, and I mean literally. I just know there are satellites involved, bristling with long, long lenses. We start somewhere out in space and come zooming in until we are underwater with a polar bear. This is like … Harry Potter on his broomstick. It gets me seasick, or some kind of sick, and yet I want more. The same with getting deep in a cave in Borneo and watching the transparent glowworms decking the cave ceiling with what look like strands of clear glass beads. Holy Mackerel, how did I get in here? Have these little creatures ever seen a photo light before? Or ANY light other than their own insect-attracting luminescence?

I feel like a biovoyeur. These sights were never "meant" for my eyes, and yet I am hooked on them because they are so gorgeous and they are for real. Well, certain aspects of my living room experience are not so real. For instance, when I'm watching the sea anemones gently waving in an ocean current, I have a strong hunch they do not go "flutter flutter flap flap" which is what I get on the sound track. And when that clam suddenly snaps shut I just know it does not sound like our front door slamming, but that's what I hear, again and again.

This is ingenious, not to say insidious application of sound effects. I'm not even talking about the kettledrums and French horns we get whenever the storm clouds come swirling in fast-mo over the mountains. These sounds are supplied on top of the BBC Orchestra's expert rendition of the score by George Fenton. When we see a critter walking through the woods, we hear the footsteps. Schools of fish or flocks of birds are accompanied by a pretty convincing swirling or swooshing. But when the clam slams I know I have been conned. Or assisted.



That's my problem, I think. I don't want so much help. Just let me look at it and think what I think. Give me a chance to digest the fabulous sights and maybe just a few facts about where this creature lives and what it eats. Don't also tell me it is cute or sinister, and don't tell me what it sounds like—unless you really know.

I have a good friend and relative who won't even look through binoculars! We used to go hiking together along the Lost Coast in California. I'd be ogling the waves from way up on a bluff, using a lot of optical assistance. I'd spot a seal and clap lenses to my face so I could get closer, closer. My pal would have none of it, preferring to see these wonders as he really sees them, from where he stands, with his face open to the distance.

From my living room chair I normally can't see any glowworms at all, not even polar bears or mandarin ducks. I can read about them, dream about them. Then I can put on my jacket and snowshoes and go down to the swamp. Last time I did this I went right through the soft ice into about a foot of water. It went (very softly) "whump." I felt chilly and wet. The dog began running in what we call "puppy circles," interpreting the scene as something exciting and maybe amusing. Maybe he could hear the BBC soundtrack.

In the swamp there is a new beaver house. I crawled over to it in the snow and sniffed at the top where the warm beaver exhalations melt their way up through the sticks. I could not hear a thing, but my jeans were soaked, the sun was bright and there were beavers down there. I did not miss the French horns, the beaver facts, David Attenborough's million-dollar voice. I know I will always love movies, but every now and then, please, keep me balanced and gimme real.

— Bonner J. McAllester

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Letter from College

The Impersonal Becomes Personal

Up until about twenty minutes ago, the idea for this month's article was for Euro-American conversations, and it was pretty much all planned out. However, after a weekend of trying to formulate impressions and experiences into a coherent train of thought, something just wasn't working. I've learned a few things during my time writing these musings of my life, and one is that you cannot force a topic for a specific month if it does not feel right. So, those wonderful and informative reminiscences of conversations will keep. Instead what seems appropriate at this moment is an acknowledgement of a recent event that has probably crossed many people's radars by now.

At 28 years old, Health Ledger, father of a two-year-old daughter and an Oscar nominee, died of a suspected drug overdose (unconfirmed) in New York last week. I learned of it almost immediately because I happened to be surfing the Internet and frequently checking email. The *New York Times* alert arrived in my inbox and I thought it was a joke. Not him—an older actor, really anyone but him. Yet it was true, although details were still coming in. My obsession with movies is fairly well known, for many people at least. Since high school, I've been a follower of movies, stars, and entertainment news. As I read the article in disbelief, I realized that this was an event that I would remember. I would know where I was when I learned the news. I remember the day my best friend and I rented the movie *10 Things I Hate About You* on a whim, I was probably thirteen. It was a wonderful teen comedy, full of laughs and teen moments, but it was his breakout role; he was 19 years old, a year younger than I am now.

Since then, I've followed his career, seen most of his movies, and admired his talent for choosing such diverse roles. When I saw the preview for *Brokeback Mountain,* I could hardly wait; it looked to me like the movie of the year even then. I was like many moviegoers of my generation: we all grew up with him, watching his evolution through his work and development as he deliberately moved away from teen heartthrob roles. The larger-than-life presence on the screen gets to people over time, I suppose. I didn't expect his death, that of someone I never met, to actually impact me in a significant way. It is a simple fact, I suppose, that knowing someone through his or her own evolution, however you witness it, does mean something. Perhaps you don't realize it until they are gone.

Death is inevitable, a sobering and terrifying realization, but his death seems so illogical, so unreal—and this is a week later. Is it because he was larger than life and suddenly such a young talent is just gone? Perhaps it seem even more shocking because I knew of his rising stardom from the early days and followed his choices and roles carefully over a large portion of my own life. A person's sense of loss is individual, and yet watching the outpouring of grief, shock, and sadness from my age group—from friends to Facebook groups—makes me feel connected to others who are also confused and unsure what this death might mean.

When I arrive home in June, I will have been away for nine months of my life. It is close to a year that I will spend away from family and friends. I have no regrets about my decision to take this time to try a new life, but it is humbling because distance and novelty force one to face insecurity. I feel far away, I think that is the point partially, but there is always an underlying concern that something could happen at home where I would be, at best, at least a day away. I live with this realization buried deeply and it is often elusive, yet shocking news like this reminds me that some events are beyond human control. I've made connections here in London, ones that grow stronger by the day. When I leave, they will of course remain, but I made a choice to invest a year of my life in another world, and I only have begun to understand what leaving this life behind will mean. Thank goodness it will remain relatively intact should I be able to return.

Making that choice means I am blessed to have this experience and make these friends and bonds, and it assumes that I will return home a fuller and more confident individual. What I learn is up to me, and at this juncture the most real aspect of all is treasuring the moments as they pass, because the fact that anything could happen to anyone has only been reinforced by an event so removed and yet so undeniably close.

Requiescat In pace.

— Tarsi Dunlop

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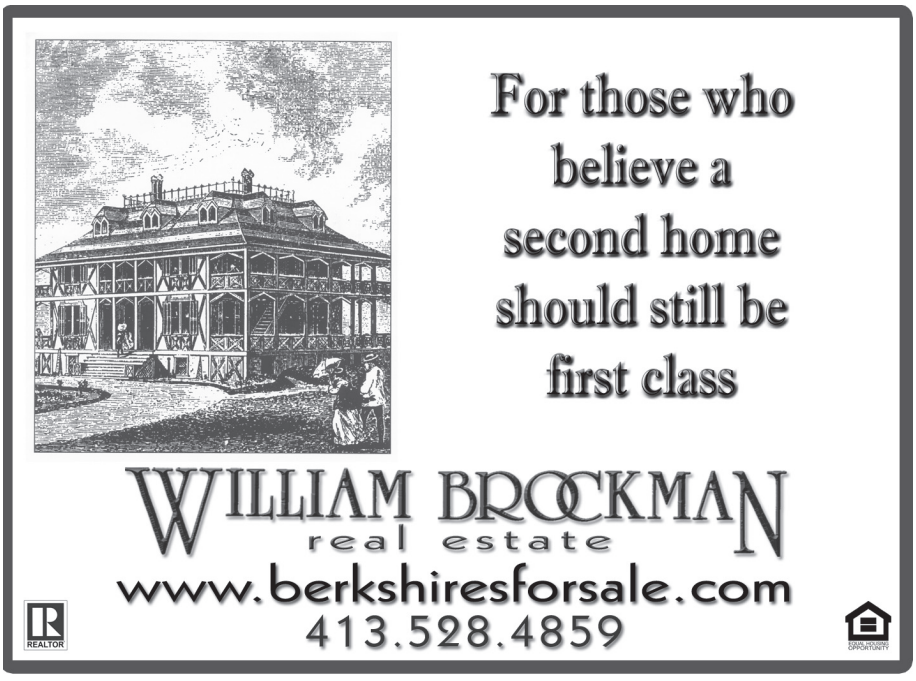

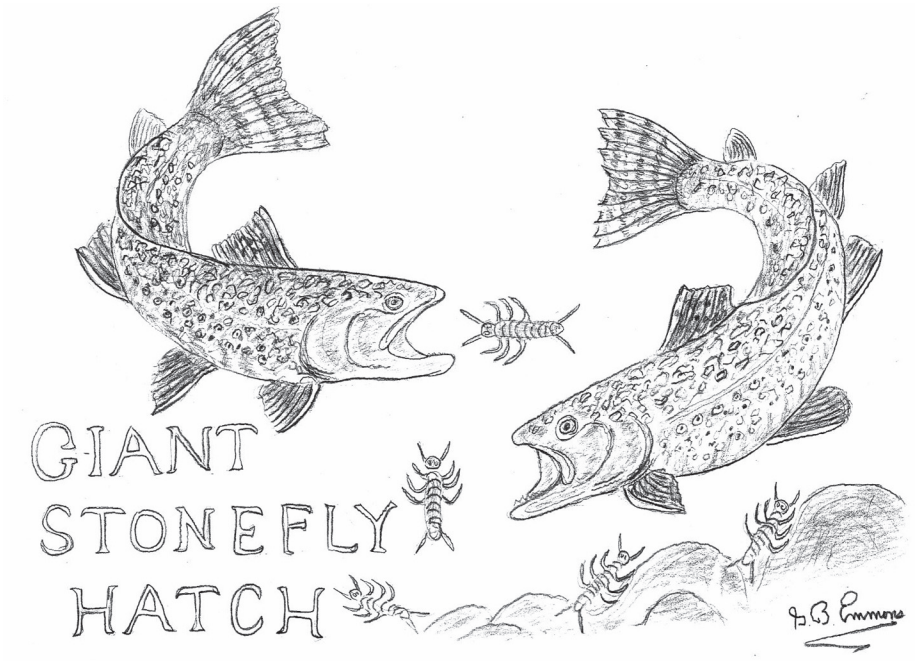

The Native Brook Trout

The native brook trout was at one time indigenous to almost all of New England. It was valued for brilliant beauty, delicious taste, fighting sport qualities, and as an indicator of watershed health. Locally these fish were called speckled trout because their dark green to brown body, lightly marbled on top near the dorsal fin, is decorated with bright spots. Classified as Salmonidae, they are descended from salmon, and also Char, and like their Arctic cousin their bellies turn red when they spawn, in autumn.

By about 1850 mills had industrialized waterways and forests along the banks had been cut down for fuel, raising water temperatures and killing off brook trout. While gold was being panned at Sutter's Mill on the West Coast, the East Coast was losing the mother lode of swimming golden nuggets left from the melting glaciers. Today the native trout exist in numbers only in the high mountains of the Appalachians and in Western Massachusetts.

Even in Monterey, beaver dams have backed up silt destroying rocky bottom habitats of the trout's insect food supply, the mayfly, damselfly, dragonfly, caddisfly, and stonefly. However, the higher feeder brooks here such as Loom Brook, Swann Brook, Harmon Brook, and upper Rawson Brook may well hold wild genetic strains never diluted by the rainbows or browns down below. There was talk at our Hatchery of a future survey for DNA research, which might write one more chapter in the history of the brook trout, possibly with a happy ending to an otherwise sad story.

— George Emmons

Mary Kate Jordan Leads Fertility Quests

Mary Kate Jordan discussed specific non-medical options for couples facing fertility issues at the January 31st meeting of the Western Massachusetts chapter of the National Guild of Hypnotists. The meeting was held in the Bangs Community Center, Bolton Walk (Main Street), in Amherst.

A practicing hypnotist specializing in Depth Hypnosis, Jordan developed Depth Hypnosis Fertility Quest, her client process option, and Shamanic Fertility Quest, her vision quest option, in response to the needs of those in her circle.

"All the skills I've developed over the last 30 years, both in my client practice and in my volunteer work, have lead up to this way of offering help," Jordan said. "It's also an extension of a deep personal transformation I had on a shamanic study program in the Orkney Islands in Scotland."

Are Depth Hypnosis Fertility Quest and Shamanic Fertility Quest compatible with medical intervention for confronting fertility issues? "They're different approaches. Neither method offers guarantees, and each has its own area of expertise," she said. "Couples can explore both possibilities and then decide which to choose, or how to balance them so they work together."

The next Berkshire Shamanic Fertility Quest will be held March 8, 10:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. For more information, contact Mary Kate, 413-528-5557.

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Notchview Nordic Skiing Center

With more snow in the forecast this winter, Nordic ski enthusiasts seeking a special spot to glide on their cross country skis this winter will want to check out Notchview, located in Windsor, Massachusetts, where the rustic highlands of the Pioneer Valley meet the high elevations of the Berkshires.

Owned and operated by the nation's oldest land trust and nonprofit conservation organization, The Trustees of Reservations, Notchview is one of Massachusetts' premier cross-country skiing centers, drawing an average of 7,000 skiers each winter. Offering 19 miles of groomed, track-set and back-country ski trails with beautiful vistas, Notchview is one of only five independent all-Nordic ski areas operating in its region. In addition to classical skiing and back-country skiing, Notchview also hosts ski skating and snowshoe enthusiasts, as well as year-round hikers and walkers, who want to get away from it all to enjoy pristine pine forests and high meadows in a non-commercial setting.

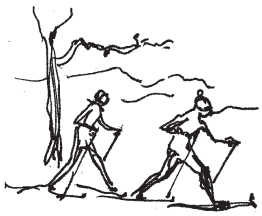
Boasting an all-volunteer Ski Patrol Program, Notchview regularly hosts youth, high school, college, and masters ski races throughout the season, including the annual Massachusetts High School Nordic championships and the New England Bill Koch Youth Ski Festival, held every four years. Due to its high elevation and extensive trail network, Notchview was recently proposed as the southern end for a long-distance, low-impact back-country ski trail envisioned by Olympic medalist Bill Koch. The trail will follow the spine of the Appalachian crest and terminate in the Gaspe Peninsula.

Having just received a generous $20,000 grant from the Department of Conservation and Recreation, The Trustees will now be able to improve the trail network and better accommodate increasing public demand for top quality, groomed Nordic ski trails.

On Saturday, February 9, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Notchview will host a Winter Trails. First-time skiers and snowshoers will receive a free trail pass for the day. Snowshoes will be available for free to try out for up to two hours. Free cross-country ski lessons will be offered for beginner and intermediate skiers at 10:30 a.m. and again at 1:30 p.m. At 11:00 a.m. Berkshire Outfitters will conduct a ski waxing clinic for both skating and diagonal techniques. At 1:30 p.m. the Trustees volunteers will lead a one-hour "Winter Woods" snowshoe hike. There will be music, food, and Nordic videos at the Budd Visitor Center. New this year is a Nordic orienteering game. People can ski along Notchview's scenic trails, following a map to reach marked locations. Each location has a unique punch code to record on a card. Prizes will be awarded based on the number of locations recorded.

On Sunday, February 10 from 1–3 p.m., Notchview will host a casual snowshoe hike that will explore the Hume Tract. Rental snowshoes will be available. A Moonlight Skiing event on Monday, February 18 from 7-9 p.m. is also planned. This traditional Nordic ski event and Notchview favorite is a great way to see the woods in a different light and to make some new friends. Stay for cider, popcorn, and conversation after the ski.

For a full list of Nordic ski clinics, races and outdoor winter sports events, please visit the Notchview section on The Trustees of Reservations website www.thetrustees.org or www.Notchview.org.



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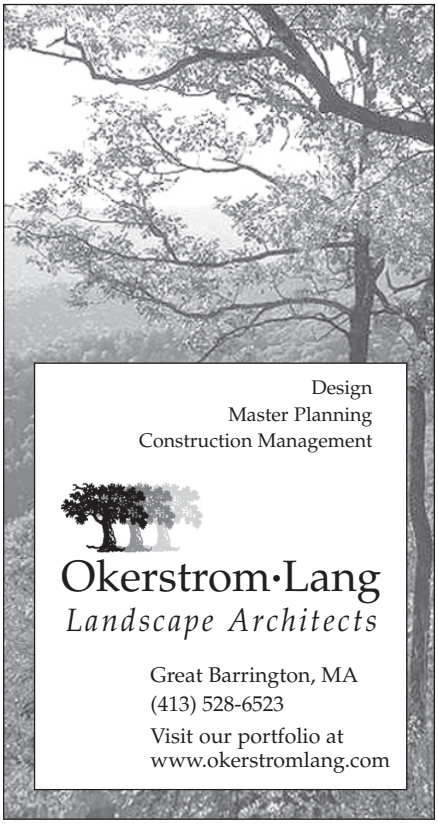

Grow a Bit of History This Year

It may be winter outside, but like most obsessed gardeners I'm up to my elbows in seed catalogs at the moment. This year it's heirloom vegetable seed varieties that are getting all the attention.

Why focus on heirlooms? Let's take the big thing first—global warming. One of the biggest risks we face in the coming climate change is the loss of genetic diversity. Food crops will not escape this fate unless we can do something about it. By now, many people have sampled a few heirloom tomatoes and know that the taste is far more distinct and flavorful than the usual mass-marketed varieties. But the issue goes way beyond novelty. Suppose we soon have only one or two types of wheat to grow. What would happen if a major blight threatens even these staples? If this seems implausible, think of the Irish potato famine: having just one main variety of potato, the Lumper, was one of the chief causes of the disaster.

Now consider regional diversity. To improve profits, big commercial seed growers emphasize seed varieties that pretty much grow all right anywhere. This approach guarantees the need for overuse of fertilizers and pesticides in order to maximize yields. Heirloom seeds, by contrast, have been passed down through generations of gardeners precisely because they grow well in a particular area. What's more, these varieties develop resistance to local pests and diseases along the way. So, we get to use less fertilizer and less, or no, pesticides and we have healthier, more tasty food to eat as well. To quote the Seed Savers Exchange, "Few gardeners comprehend the true scope of their garden heritage or how much is in immediate danger of being lost forever."

Finally, we come to the fun part—preserving our history. While there are many lovely places to live in this country, none can boast the rich New England history that is all around us. How wonderful it would be to know our region's ancestors through the seeds they passed down. A few examples:

From Maine come "Yellow Eye" beans, which are still the bean of choice for New England baked beans. This variety is one of the original "Bean Hole Beans," so called because they were cooked in an iron pot in a hole in the ground. The colonists learned the technique from Native Americans. Available from Fedco as "Kenearly" beans.

"True Red Cranberry" beans, whose seeds were rediscovered in Steep Falls, Maine, after an 11-year search, are one of the oldest American varieties, probably Native American. Available from Fedco and Seed Savers Exchange.

"Boothby's Blonde" cucumbers have been preserved by the Boothby family of Livermore, Maine, for five generations. Available from Pinetree Garden Seeds and Fedco.

"Danvers Half Long" carrots were developed by market growers in Danvers, Massachusetts, in 1871. Widely available, including from Pinetree Garden Seeds.

"Abenaki Calais Flint" ornamental corn was grown by the Abenaki Indians and preserved in Calais, Vermont. This is supposed to be the only corn that survived in Vermont in 1816, the year without a summer due to the eruption of the Mount Tambora volcano in Indonesia. Available from Fedco.

"Red Wethersfield" onions were developed by growers in Wethersfield, Connecticut, in 1843. Workers in the onion fields were mostly women and were known throughout the region as the "Onion Maidens." As legend had it, the "Onion Maidens" wore silk dresses on Sundays and were considered a good catch for marriage-minded bachelors. Red Wethersfields are available from Pinetree and Seeds of Change.

"Connecticut Field" pumpkins, known as the traditional jack-o'-lantern pumpkin, were introduced to the colonists by Native Americans before 1700. Available from Fedco.

The "Blue Hubbard" squash probably originated in South America and was brought to Marblehead, Massachusetts, aboard ships from the West Indies in the 1700s. Available from Pinetree Garden Seeds.

"Green Mountain" potatoes, bred by O. H. Alexander, of the Green Mountains, Vermont, in 1885, are still considered to be among the tastiest. Available from Fedco.

Good sources of seed exist in the Northeast, of course, but for some heirloom seeds it is necessary to use providers from all over the country. Our wet New England summers do not provide ideal conditions for seed production. (Even Northeast seed companies sometimes have their varieties grown elsewhere to get a good seed crop.) Once you get going, however, you can try saving your own seeds. Any seed that you grow and save over several years will become more adapted to your particular growing conditions. If you want to be sure that your seeds stay true to their original variety,

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you will have to separate the crop from similar types to avoid cross-pollination. Good resources for seed-saving techniques are *Organic Seed Production and Saving,* available through the Northeast Organic Farming Association, and *Seed to Seed*, by Suzanne Ashworth, available through various booksellers.

So, venture forth! If you want to see an heirloom vegetable garden in action, come visit the Bidwell House Museum this summer. The Garden Angels (a dedicated group of volunteers) and I grow New England heirlooms there. And, if you have heirloom seed tales to tell, please pass them on! You can contact me at ruthgreen7@verizon.net.

A Sampling of Seed Sources

Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds. Mansfield, MO. All heirlooms. The catalog is a great read. www.RareSeeds.com

The Cook's Garden. Warminster, PA. Especially good for lettuce and other salad greens. www.cooksgarden.com

Fedco. Waterville, Maine. Lots of great heirlooms. You'll have to hunt through the descriptions, because there are no symbols to guide you, but it's worth it. www.fedcoseeds.com

Pinetree Garden Seeds. New Gloucester, Maine. Good source for greens, potatoes, tomatoes, and others. www.superseeds.com

Seeds of Change. El Guique, N.M. Good variety of heirloom vegetables, good on descriptions, all organic. www.seedsofchange.com

Seed Savers Exchange. A nonprofit, in existence since 1975, dedicated to seed saving and education. They offer a wide variety of seeds for sale online and an immense collection to members. www.seedsavers.org

Helpful Reading Material

100 Vegetables and Where They Come From, by William Woys Weaver, 2000. Includes some New England heirlooms. Widely available in paperback version.

Garden Seed Inventory, sixth edition, published by Seed Savers Exchange, 2004. An unequaled catalog of seed varieties and growers. Although it is a little out of date, this publication brings home the point that heirloom varieties are continually lost to commerce. (Seed Savers should soon be producing a seventh edition.) www.seedsavers.org

Seed to Seed, Second Edition (also mentioned above), by Suzanne Ashworth, 2002. Lots of good information about growing and saving seed. Widely available.

The Vegetable Gardener's Bible, by Edward C. Smith, 2000. A great resource for any vegetable grower. From Storey Press.

— Ruth Green

A Greener Lifestyle with White-Out

Here is a suggestion for saving trees, reducing use of toxic inks, stopping petroleum-based transportation of goods, and actually halting aging in its tracks. A few years ago at Christmastime we gave our younger (adult) daughter a handsome wall calendar with color photos of tigers. Tigers in the snow, in the water, on the rocks. Adorable baby tigers, magnificent adult tigers, a few in-between tigers. We thought it was a fine calendar, but when the Xmas dust had settled and the kids taken their loot and gotten on the bus back to Boston, this tiger calendar remained.

Did we toss the calendar? Did we expend postage and such to send the tigers galloping after our kid to Boston? No!

We kept those tigers and not just for their natal year but year after year after year. We developed the art of making 05 be 06 be 07 and now, 08. All it takes is a little white-out and the stroke of a pen. Obviously we are re-using our calendar, our tigers. But every month when we turn the page and get out our doctoring tools, we have the illusion (or maybe ... not?) that we are reliving our lives, or having another go at an October or maybe a May from last year and the year before. Time, in fact, has gone green for us, going round and round just like the seasons. The next trick, for us green-minded folks, will be to figure out how to go round and round without the aid of white-out.

— Bonner McAllester

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Hannah Climena Pixley back in Print

Monterey News, Inc., is pleased to announce a reprint publication of *Hannah Climena Pixley: A Life In Monterey, 1862–1953,* edited with an introduction by Peter Murkett. Originally published by the Monterey News in 1996, the story has been long out-of-print. Eric Wilska, owner of The Bookloft in Great Barrington, specializes in reprinting local Berkshire histories through his business, The Troy Book Makers.

At the heart of the fifty-page book is the autobiography of Hannah Pixley, born in Monterey during the Civil War. She was a strong, independent farmwoman who lived well into modern times, always keeping country ways. Her oral narrative, written down by her daughter, is an authentic piece of history that adds to our understanding of rural New England. It is also a compelling story of family relationships, struggle, and simple joy told in an unschooled, haunting voice.

The book includes supplementary materials providing background for the narrative—maps, genealogy, original artwork, photographs, and nineteenth-century newspaper accounts of a dramatic fight to the death between her uncle and stepfather witnessed by Hannah Pixley when she was a young girl.

Hannah Climena Pixley is available at The Bookloft, 332 Stockbridge Road, Barrington Plaza, Great Barrington, MA 01230 (413-528-1521) or through the store's website, www.thebookloft.com. The cost is $8.95

Putting the Skids on Salt

Every winter, we apply salt to sidewalks and roads to reduce ice and snow buildup. The most commonly used deicing salt is sodium chloride (NaCl), which is readily available and inexpensive and effectively depresses the freezing point of water to melt ice. But salt builds up in the soil and reduces the ability of plants to absorb water and nutrients. It also contaminates drinking watershed ecosystems. Unfortunately, there is no environmentally perfect solution that will keep roads and sidewalks completely clear of ice.

A good first step is simply to reduce the use of products that contain high levels of chlorides and urea, which pose health risks to people and the environment. Use deicers with potassium, calcium, and magnesium chlorides, which contain fewer chlorides than traditional road salt. However, they still may contain metals, so use only what you need.

You can also use ashes, kitty litter, or sand to increase traction and shovel soon after it snows to prevent ice buildup.

Otis Cultural Council events

The weekend of February 9–10 brings two special free events to celebrate Valentine's Day. Both will be held at Farmington River Elementary School, Main Road, Otis. On Saturday, February 9, a Valentine Cabaret of song and entertainment by Berkshire Music School "Cabaret To Go" will be followed by a potluck dinner (beverage, bread, entree, salad or dessert entitles you to admission to the dinner). Following dinner, Richie O, our local DJ, will provide us with dance music for your enjoyment. Door prizes and 50/50 will be part of the fun.

On Sunday February 10, come relax and enjoy massage! A couples' massage workshop will be offered by Laura Lin, Kripalu Yoga teacher, from 10 a.m.–1:00 p.m. at F.R.E.S. Share nurturing touch with a friend or loved one, and be introduced to the ancient healing art of Thai Yoga Massage. The workshop is free, but there is a limit of 12 couples. Singles welcome. Call 269-7266 to register.

Both events are sponsored by the Otis Cultural Council with support of the Massachusetts Cultural Council. For info, call 413-269-0220.

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Sunday, 8:00–11:00 am

Calendar

Every Monday (exc. holidays): Select Board meeting, 8:30 a.m., Town Offices.

Every Friday & Saturday in February: Music nights at Monterey General Store, 7–9 p.m., no cover See ad p. 2.

Saturday, February 2: Monterey Democratic Party caucus, 10 a.m., Meetinghouse basement. See p. 8.

Tuesday, February 5: Super Tuesday Presidential Primary. Polls open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Monterey Firehouse. See p. 9.

Saturday, February 9:

Informational meeting on Property Tax Work-Off Program for seniors, Monterey Town Hall, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. See p. 7.

Denise Andrus will read a story and lead young children in a craft; 10:30 a.m., at Monterey Library.

Sunday, February 10: Dog Bite Prevention class, 4 p.m., Lambie Hall at New England Keswick in Monterey. Free; see p. 10.

Wednesday, February 13: Community Potluck Dinner, 6 p.m., Fellowship Hall of Monterey Meetinghouse. Entertainment by the Chord Sharks, award-winning barbershop quartet. See p. 7.

Thursday, February 14: Free Blood Pressure Clinic, 2:00 p.m., Monterey Town Hall Meeting Room.

Tuesday, February 19: Free Health Screening, Community Health Program, 10 a.m., Town Hall Meeting Room.

Friday, Feb. 22: Free Film at The Friends Meetinghouse in Great Barrington. "Don't Call Me a Saint," the life of Dorothy Day, founder of the Catholic Worker Movement. Information 528-9385 (Bonner McAllester). 7:00 p.m., discussion after the film.

Saturday, February 23:

Republican Party caucus, Meetinghouse basement, 1:30 p.m. See p. 8.

Contra and Square Dance at the Sheffield Grange, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Mountain Laurel Band, with Bill Olsen (from Maine) calling. Although the dances have moved to Dewey Hall, this one WILL be back at the Grange, just this month. 8:30–11:30 p.m. Adults $6, children $3. Information 528-9385.

Saturday, March 15: Basketmaking Workshop taught by Wendy Jensen, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monterey Meetinghouse. No experience necessary, preregistration required. See p. 10.

Drop Box for Monterey News Submissions

Thanks to Kenn Basler at the Monterey General Store, the *News* now has a convenient drop box in the center of town where submissions may be left without going through the post office or trekking out to the editor's home. The box is on the door on the loading dock at the store. We invite and encourage submissions from readers—articles, drawings, photographs, announcements, poems, signed letters, or surprise us with something new. Just leave them in the drop box and the editor will pick them up.

The Observer

December 26–January 25

High temp. (1/8)	57°
Low temp. (1/4)	-7°
Snowfall	22 in.
Total precipitation (rain and melted snow)	2.89 in.

Rainfall occurred on 20 days.

Contributors

We thank the following folks for their recent contributions. Your support makes it possible for us to continue publishing.

Eleanor Kimberley
George Emmons
William Swan
Sharon Wiles

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Our editorial address is *Monterey News*, P. O. Box 9, Monterey, MA, 01245. We invite signed letters, articles, drawings, poetry, and photographs from readers. Please send submissions (e-mail or computer disk if possible) by the 20th of the month before publication, addressed to the Editor. There is also a drop box on the loading dock at the Monterey General Store where submissions may be left. Send any change of address, or initial request to receive the *News* by mail (free) to same address. We will set up an ad for your Monterey-based business or event, or advertisers may submit a computer formatted ad (pdf, tif, or jpeg format—Word files not acceptable) with graphics. Address requests for advertising rates and further information to the Editor, or telephone us at 413-528-4347 or e-mail montnews@localnet.com.

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Contributions from local artists this month:
Rachel Arnow, p. 13; Maureen Banner, pp. 7, 12, 19;
George Emmons, p. 18; Bonner McAllester, p. 16.

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